



January 19, 2025 – Epiphany 2 (C) Epiphany Bible Study: Week 2

During the season of Epiphany, The Episcopal Church’s Office of Global Partnerships is offering a weekly Bible study prepared by writers across the church and Anglican Communion. Each piece, consisting of the Sunday readings, can be studied alone, in small groups, or even with a congregation. You can find the whole study for each week at www.sermonsthatwork.org. This week’s study for Epiphany 2 (C) was written by **the Most Rev. Ian Ernest**, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s personal representative to the Holy See and the director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were gentiles you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, ⁵and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds

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of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Commentary from Ian Ernest

I wish to lay emphasis on one part of this text which refers to the unity of the Church. Being the Body of Christ, the Church is called to allow every part of it to play its role so that it can bear true witness to the love of God as revealed in Christ. There is no place for uniformity in the Church, as within it people are bestowed with different gifts and have different tasks to attend to. The gift is offered by the Holy Spirit and is designed for an interdependent life in unity and harmony which brings glory to God.

As all gifts come from God, each one is therefore invited to use his or her competence in the service of God. Unfortunately, we have an erroneous perception that the gifts we receive are limited to the spiritual or the academic realm. Thus, it would be important for us to acknowledge that no distinction is to be made regarding the gifts we freely receive. A person who is a worker in a skilled trade, for example, a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, and others, should be encouraged to see that the talent he or she possesses comes from God.

The Church would then be enriched if all were given the opportunity to dedicate their skills to serve God and his people. This teaching of Paul also gives a detailed view of the gifts graciously offered to us; from it, we learn about the work and nature of the early Church. It informs us that, as members of the Body of Christ, we have to possess the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. This means that we have to know the deep things about God and simultaneously apply them to our daily lives.

Discussion Questions

Do we have a full understanding of how we could serve God and God's people with the potential we have?

What is the distinction between wisdom and knowledge?

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